

INFORMATION REPORT

DATE DISTR. 9 June 1954.

NO. OF PAGES 3

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO. 50X1

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The only road from the USSR to Mongolia

50X1 [] was the one beginning near Chita (52° 03' N - 113° 30' E) and going to Undur-Khan (47° 19' N - 110° 39' E) on the Karalen River in Mongolia. An old gravel road, sixty kilometers in length, continually recrossed the railroad track on the Trans-Siberian Railroad between the Chita and Darasun (52° 18' N - 115° 40' E) stations. In 1936 [] plans to build a new road between Chita and Darasun from three to five kilometers from the railroad in order to avoid the continual crossings. The road from Darasun went south toward the Mongolian border, passing about four kilometers to the northwest of Aksha (50° 16' N - 113° 17' E) and then on to Khapcherenga (49° 42' N - 112° 10' E). In 1936, the road from Darasun was changed from a third class road to a second class road and it was moved one to two kilometers to the east of Khapcherenga, continuing on to the Mongolian border at Nizhniy Chibkhun as a second class road. From the Mongolian border, there was a third class road that continued on to Undur-Khan, which was finished in 1936. In 1937, orders were received to change the road from the Mongolian border into a second class road up to the point where it crossed the river Uldza (49° 56' N - 115° 31' E) and to build a strategically important second class road from that point to Baintumen (48° 04' N - 114° 30' E) near the Manchurian border. The bridge

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over the Uldza was about sixty meters long and eight meters wide, with two lanes of traffic in each direction. The only other large bridge on the road was the one crossing the river Onan (51° 41' N - 115° 47' E) near the Mongolian border, which was a Permii Gau type.

2. There was relatively little traffic over the road [redacted] maintenance crews and, very occasionally, military vehicles crossing the border. The part of the road between Khapcherenga and Darasun was more heavily utilized as large tin mines were located in Khapcherenga. There were about ten three-ton Zis trucks per day carrying tin from Khapcherenga to Darasun. At Darasun the tin was loaded onto freight cars. On the return trip to Khapcherenga, the trucks carried supplies for the workers at the tin mines. There were military garrisons in both Undur-Khan and Baintumen, but their supplies did not come on the road from Darasun to Undur-Khan. Instead, they were transported by train along the Trans-Siberian Railway to a station near the Manchurian border, and then by Zis truck into Mongolia along an old Czarist road which runs near and parallel to the Manchurian border down to Baintumen. The supplies for the garrison at Undur-Khan were carried on an old road from Baintumen.
3. There is another road into Mongolia [redacted] between Ulan-Ude and Ulan-Bator, crossing the Mongolian border at Kyakhta (50° 20' N - 106° 30' E). This road had not been completely finished in 1939. [redacted] It was built not as a commercial route, but for strategic and military purposes, and had very little traffic.

Border Check Points

4. There were no extensive border checking arrangements on the roads into Mongolia [redacted] because the traffic on them was so negligible. There were fairly strict contraband regulations to prevent the smuggling of cheap Mongolian goods into the USSR. The Soviet authorities used Mongolia as a dumping ground for any excess goods, and prices in Mongolia were therefore much cheaper. A suit that could readily be bought in Mongolia for about 150 turics in 1938 (equivalent to about 200 rubles) would cost 800 to 1000 rubles in the USSR. Boots costing 15 turics in Mongolia (about 20 rubles), would cost 100 rubles in the USSR. Many commodities were thus four or five times more expensive in the USSR than in Mongolia. The Soviet authorities, therefore, set up very strict regulations to control the finances of any Soviet personnel working in Mongolia, such as the approximately twenty Soviet maintenance personnel stationed near the Uldza River on the Darasun to Undur-Khan road. The personnel received only 10% of their salary in Mongolian turics, and the rest was deposited in a bank in Ashka in Russian rubles. There were also standard regulations set up for these workers, as to the quantity of certain commodities which they could buy. A member of the Soviet road maintenance crew in Mongolia for instance, was permitted to buy one suit in Mongolia if he worked there six months, two suits if he worked there one year, and three suits if he worked there two years. The guards at the border control points on the roads between the USSR and Mongolia checked the documents and also searched for any contraband.

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There were four or five soldiers of the NKVD border guard at the border control points, both on the Darasun to Undur-Khan road and the old Czarist road near the Manchurian border leading to Baintumen. In 1938, the border control point on the Darasun to Undur-Khan road was established as an international frontier crossing with customs inspection. The road to Baintumen always had a customs inspection station at the border, probably because it was so near to Manchuria. All vehicles travelling across the border on the Darasun to Undur-Khan road had to get documents from the Regional Highway Administration permitting them to make the trip across the border; these documents were examined by the border guards. Permission for vehicle crossings into Mongolia from the USSR was obtainable in Chita; an office at the Uldza River bridge on the Darasun to Undur-Khan road issued permission for vehicles to cross from Mongolia to the USSR. In addition to vehicle permits, individual permits were required for each person crossing the Mongolian border. The border check points, however, did not usually cause more than a fifteen minute delay in passage.

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